

S E R M O N

ON THE

BEAUTY of HOLINESS,

IN THE

W O R S H I P of the

CHURCH of ENGLAND.

B E I N G

A very brief *Rationale* on the LITURGY.

Preached at *Stratford* in *Connecticut*, and at the opening of *Christ's*
Church at *Guilford*.

By *SAMUEL JOHNSON*, D. D. *President*

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Holiness becometh thy House, O Lord, forever. Pf. xcvi. 6.

*Cujusvis hominis est errare, nullius nisi insipientis in errore
perseverare.* Cic.

N E W - Y O R K :

Printed and Sold by *JAMES PARKER* and COMP. at the
New Printing-Office in *Beaver-Street*. 1763.

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BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

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ADVERTISEMENT.

HAVING lately published a small Tract, on the Reasonableness and Importance of the great Duty of Prayer, and a diligent Attendance on the public Worship; (which, I thank God hath been attended with some good Effect) it was thought adviseable, as a Sequel to that, to publish this short Rationale on the Excellency and Beauty of our public Liturgy: And I beg Leave, as a Testimony of my good Will, to recommend it to the Attention of the good People of New-England, and particularly of Stratford, to whom I administered for above thirty Years; and also of West-Chester to whom I officiated for a considerable Time, and those of New-York, by whom I have been kindly accepted and treated as their Lecturer for seven Years; that they may with the better Understanding and Affections, offer up their Devotions, in the public Use of this excellent Liturgy; being truly

Their affectionate Friend and Servant in Christ,

King's College,
May 25, 1761.

S. J.





Of the Beauty of HOLINESS in the WORSHIP of the CHURCH of ENGLAND.

PSAL. XCVI. 9. *O! worship the Lord in the Beauty of
Holiness,----*



IT is a common Mistake which hath too much prevailed in these Times, and in this Country, and that even among some well-meaning People, that they seem to account the Hearing of Sermons, to be the principal and most important and edifying Part of the publick Worship of God. Hence, as it is very likely that Some, heretofore, left the Church under the Notion that they could elsewhere meet with, what was then, though with very little Reason, called the most powerful Preaching; so Others may have conformed to the Church, principally, from being sensible (especially in the late Times of Confusion) that the Doctrines of Christianity were more truly, more purely, and in a more instructive Manner taught in the Church than out of it. In which they indeed judged very rightly; and this was, among others, a very good Reason for their conforming to it. And as this was the principal Occasion with Many, of their coming over to us, so it is not unlikely that there may be Some, with whom the Worship of the Church, after all, may seem but tolerable for the sake of the Doctrine, and they may not, even yet, have any high Sense of the Excellency of it, and its vast Preference to the extempore Way.

ON the other Hand, it is very probable, that there are but too many of Those who have been bred up, and lived
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all their Days in the Bosom of the Church, and in the Use of its publick Worship ; who, partly by Reason of the Commonness of it, and partly their Negligence, and for Want of giving a due Attention to the Propriety and Excellency of every Part of it ; may not be sufficiently sensible what a Pearl of inestimable Price they enjoy, nor duly thankful for it : As they daily breathe in the Air, and enjoy the Sun, and the Beauties and Fruits of the Earth, without being so deeply sensible of these wonderful Favours and Blessings of Providence, (by Reason of the Commonness of them, and their own strange Incogitancy) or being so affectionately thankful for them, as the vast Worth and Importance of them do most reasonably deserve and require.

WHAT I aim at, therefore, in the following Discourse, is to awaken us all, both of the one and the other Sort, to a just Sense of the intrinsic Worth and Excellency of that Method of worshipping God our Heavenly Father, which we are so happy as to enjoy in the *Church of England* ; that we may be affectionately thankful to his kind Providence for so ordering Things as to give us the inestimable Advantage of it ; that we may give the stronger Attention to the Propriety and Usefulness of every Part of it ; and that our Souls may be filled with the greater Devotion and Edification in the Use of it ; as being sensible that we do truly *worship God in the Beauty of Holiness*, and are under the greatest Advantage of *growing up in Holiness and Comfort thro' Faith unto eternal Salvation*.

It is indeed an unspeakable Advantage that we enjoy by the preaching of God's Holy Word, and particularly in this excellent Church, in that we have it explained to us in the clearest and most intelligible Manner, and that according to the original Simplicity of the Gospel : That being freed from human Schemes and Devices, we are set at Liberty from all those idle absurd and groundless Notions of God and the Gospel, which, both tend to give us hard and unworthy Apprehensions of *the Father of Mercies*, and to make his Gospel, (the plainest and best Thing in the World) a meer unintelligible Riddle, almost void of common Sense ; and at the same Time, to weaken and enervate it's most powerful Motives to the utmost Vigour and Activity on our Part,

Part, and to discourage our earnest Prayers and Endeavours, by filling us with endless Doubts and Fears, and dark Surmizes and Despondencies : For in the Church we are led to attend to nothing but the plain Language and Meaning of the Holy Ghost ; and have all the most salutary Doctrines, Precepts, Promises and Threatnings of the Gospel so clearly set before us, and the Way of our Duty and the Road to everlasting Happiness made so plain, that *he that runs may read, and the wayfaring Man though a Fool cannot err therein* : This I say is an unspeakable Happiness, and we ought to prize it *beyond Gold, even the finest Gold, and to taste a Sweetness in it beyond that of Honey, and the Honey Comb,* and make Conscience of diligently attending upon it ; but yet strictly speaking, preaching is not to be considered as being properly a Part of the publick Worship, but rather as an Appendage to it.

FOR the proper Notion of Worshipping God, consists in praising him for all his Benefits, and praying to him for whatsoever we want both for Soul and Body, and in devoting ourselves to his true and faithful Service : In all which we do, as it were, converse with the great *Father of our Spirits*, and have the nearest Intercourse with him that our Souls are capable of ; and consequently should put the greatest Value upon it, as the principal End of our meeting together at the House of God ; and that we may openly and jointly do all the Honour we can to him our common heavenly Father. So that if there were no Sermon at all, we should go together to the publick Offices of Prayer and Praise, with not a Whit the less Zeal and Forwardness ; forasmuch as our Business there, is, not to hear any new Thing, but to do our Duty to our great Creator, and Benefactor ; especially since the Reading of God's Holy Word is a great Part of our publick Worship, and that, vastly preferable to any human Composition or Preaching whatsoever.

LET us then learn to value Things in Proportion to the real Worth of them, and prefer the Worship of the Church, for the solid intrinsick Worth and Importance of it, before any the most eloquent Preaching : Whereas, I doubt, if there were no Preaching, or none very good, there are
Many

Many that would hardly think it worth their While to go to Church meerly to worship God, though that is by far the most valuable and important Part of our publick Service. And we ought to account it a very great Advantage and Excellency of our Church, that her publick Worship is always the same, and equally excellent, even the best in the World, howsoever indifferent the Capacity or Abilities of the Minister may be, considered as a Preacher. In order therefore that we may highly prize it, and make a serious and conscientious Use of it, and think ourselves very happy in it; I proceed, from the Words I have read, to explain and point out to you, the real Worth and Excellency of it; and in Conformity to it, call upon you all, as I truly may, in the Words of the holy Psalmist, *O! Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness.*

KING David was one of the greatest Patterns of true Devotion that ever lived, as well as one of the best Composers of Publick Forms for the right Exercise of it: And it is to be remarked, that his admirable Compositions have stood the Test of Time, and been constantly used both by the Jewish and Christian Church, as forms of publick Worship, for at least 2750 Years, which abundantly speaks the Excellency of them. We indeed can use only a Translation of them, and that we use, may (chiefly through Length of Time and Alteration in our Language,) need a few Emendations; and those that know the Original, are very sensible that no Translation can come up to the noble Simplicity and Grandeur of the original Language: However the Translation we have, generally carrieth in it such an inimitable Majesty, and intelligible Simplicity, that no modern Compositions can be compared with it. I say this holy King was one of the greatest Patterns of Devotion that ever lived.

For though the Materials for Devotion, then, were much short of what they are now, under the more clear Christian Dispensation; yet he seems to have had such a Spirit of Devotion, as put him into a Kind of Rapture at the Thoughts of it. *I was glad,* says he, *when they said come let us go up to the House of the Lord, &c.* And again *One Thing have I desired, and that will I seek after, that I might*

might dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of my Life, to behold the fair Beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple. And, Lord, says he, I have loved the Habitation of thy House, and the Place where thine Honour dwelleth; and again, One Day in thine House is better than a Thousand: I had rather be a Door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness; for the Lord God is a Sun and a Shield, and he will give Grace and Glory, and no good Thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. And as his Soul was thus full of the Spirit of Devotion, which indeed appears every where in his Psalms, so he takes Occasion from innumerable and various Occurrences to express it in these his divine Odes: And never was Zeal and Generosity like his in providing for building the House of God, and in framing and establishing Orders for the decent Administration of the publick Worship, as appears from the latter Chapters of the 2d Book of Samuel, and the first Book of Chronicles. And it is plain from this Psalm, compared with that admirable Hymn in 1 Chron. xvi. given out on Occasion of his establishing the publick Worship, in which these very Words are contained, v. 29. that it is the publick Worship regularly established, that he means by the *Beauty of Holiness*. We find these Words also in the 29th Psalm, which was doubtless made upon Occasion of some remarkable Thunder Storm, wherein he doth, in a most sublime Manner, celebrate the Majesty and Glory of God, displaying itself in Thunder, which he elegantly calls the *Voice of the Lord*, addressing himself to the great People of the Earth, and calling upon them to admire and adore the Majesty of the Divinity, *Give unto the Lord, O ye Mighty! give unto the Lord Glory and Strength. Give unto the Lord, the Glory due unto his Name, and worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness*. And in this Psalm, he does in the same Words call upon all Nations, even the Heathen, as well as his own People, to celebrate the Glory of the great Author of all Things, after a general Invitation to *declare his Glory among the Heathen, his Wonders among all People*; very likely with a propheticall View at the Propagation of Christianity: He adds, *For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised,*

praised, he is to be feared above all Gods : For the Gods of the Nations are Idols, but the Lord made the Heavens; Honour and Majesty are before him, Strength and Beauty are in his Sanctuary ; give unto the Lord, O ye Kindreds of the People ; give unto the Lord Glory and Strength ; give unto the Lord the Glory due unto his Name, bring an Offering and come into his Presence ; O worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness ; fear before him all the Earth. From these Words therefore, which thus appear to have been frequently used in the most antient publick Worship of God appointed by *David*, and continued down through such a vast Tract of Time, I shall take Occasion to explain to you the Excellency of our Worship in the *Church of England* ; which follows the most ancient Church of God both Jewish and Christian, and many of whose Forms are taken from the most pure and primitive Liturgies, and which indeed, as Mr. *Bingham* shews*, obtained from the Beginning of Christianity ; being on many Accounts the most pure and primitive Church, at this Day upon the Face of the Earth. - And as there are three Things obvious in the Text, viz. 1. *The Worship of God.* 2. *The Holiness of that Worship.* And, 3. *The Beauty of that Holiness,* I shall ;

I. Shew that in the Church of *England* we do most truly worship Almighty God.

II. That our Worship is a most *holy* Worship, and tends to promote Holiness in the best Manner. And,

III. That it is a most *beautiful* Worship, and is truly worshipping God *in the Beauty of Holiness.*

I. In the Church of *England* we do most truly worship Almighty God. For *Worship* consists in a most serious and solemn Address to the great Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the World ; testifying from the Bottom of our Hearts our Dependence upon Him, and Submission to Him ; praising Him for every Thing we enjoy, praying to Him for whatsoever we want, and devoting ourselves sincerely and entirely to his Service. Now all these Things are abundantly provided

* Origines Eccles.

provided for in our Forms, as I shall shew you presently: And that in the best Manner, which is certainly best done by public Forms, established by lawful Authority, and known and agreed to by all the Worshippers.—For how can I worship God with the full Devotion of my Soul, unless I have beforehand satisfied myself with what I am to offer up?—And how can a worshipping Assembly jointly and with one Heart and Soul, and with *a full Assurance of Faith*, offer up their Prayers and Praises to God, unless they have properly a *Common Prayer*, and are beforehand all satisfied that what is to be offered is both agreeable to the Will of God, and suitable to their common Necessities and Occasions? And how can they otherwise offer up their publick Devotions agreeable to Christ's express Instructions, who plainly requireth, they should be *agreed touching what they would ask*, as a Condition of their receiving it? *Mat. xviii. 19. If two of you shall agree on Earth, as touching any Thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven,* If there were a Number of us to ask a Favour of an earthly Prince or Governor, we should be very careful and exact in composing our Address; we should take great Care that it be well worded, and that we be all fully agreed beforehand, both in the Matter and Manner of our Address: How much more when we are to address the great God of Heaven and Earth, and that for the Life, even the eternal Life of our Souls? How fit and necessary is it, that we should accurately compose our Address, and be beforehand well agreed and satisfied, both in the Matter and Manner of it; so as to have nothing to do when we come to offer it, but to offer up our whole Souls with it, and make it our most devout free Act and Deed?

ON which Account, though I would by no Means uncharitably censure any, yet I must think that the best that can be said of the extemporary Way used by our Dissenting Brethren, is, that it is indeed a very imperfect Way of Worship, and can never be justified. For as to him that offers it up, how can he perform it with true Devotion, when he can scarce be said to be agreed beforehand with himself what to offer; and the chief Force of his Mind which should be employed in Devotion, must be taken up while
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he is speaking, in inventing what to say, and how to express it. And it is much if he does not make some shocking Blunders, besides the Loss of his Devotion. A great and good Man*, who was an excellent Judge in Things of this Nature, declared it his Opinion, That a Prayer is one of the *most difficult Compositions* that a Man can set himself about, to perform it with Justness and Propriety; meaning only in Composing it beforehand: How surprising a Thing then is it that any one can have the Assurance to trust to unpremeditated Effusions on so serious and solemn an Occasion as that of addressing the great and tremendous God? Who does, in effect, strictly forbid it, in *Eccl. v. 2. Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thy Heart be hasty to utter any Thing before God: For God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth, therefore let thy Words be few.*

AND then, as to the People who are to join in his Prayer, how can they be agreed to join with it, when they know not what it will be? They cannot be agreed in it, unless they have an implicit Faith in their Minister, like the Roman Catholics, so as to think him in some Sort infallible. And indeed this was the original Notion of what we call extemporary Prayer: It was pretended that their Prayers were immediately dictated by the Spirit of God, and therefore they must be infallible. But there are Few, I trust now, that have such an idle Notion of them; and how they should be so misled as to continue the Use of them, I cannot conceive. For as they do not now pretend to be inspired, the People must consider after the Minister has uttered each Petition, whether they can agree to it before they can offer it up as their own Act, without which it is no Act of Worship in them; and while they do this, he is gone along in his Prayer, and they have lost what he has been uttering in the Interim; which demonstrates that this is a very ill-judged and confused Way of Worship, and far from being a Help, that it is a Hindrance to true Devotion, which accordingly seems in great Danger of being lost among them; while they are apt to think it is the Minister's Business to pray, and their's only to hear him, and not to pray themselves, and many are tempted to gaze about instead of praying.

BUT how happy are we, my Brethren, who have a most excellent Form prepared for us, by some of the wisest and best Men that ever lived, and many of whom underwent the Fire of Martyrdom for what they did? I say, that we have, by them an excellent Form of publick Devotion compiled for us, chiefly out of the Word of God, and conformed to it, in which, therefore, if we believe the Scriptures, we must be perfectly agreed and satisfied; so that when we come to worship God in publick, we have nothing else to do but to prepare our Hearts, and give up our whole Souls, and exert the utmost Force of our Minds and Hearts in offering it up to our Heavenly Father; and so can *with one Mind and one Mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, as St. Paul requires, *Rom. xv. 16.* (which is scarcely possible in the extempore Way) and which we plainly see to be a true Method of Worship, as it contains Praises to God for every Thing we enjoy, both Temporal and Spiritual, and Prayers for every Thing we can want, either for Soul or Body, either for ourselves or others. Let us therefore be heartily thankful to God's good Providence, that we have such an excellent Method of publick Worship, and let us make a faithful Use of it to the best Purposes; in order to which, let each one have his Book, and keep it in his Eye, the better to engage his Attention; that avoiding all indecent gazing about, we may make it the Business of our Souls, in the House of God, so offer it up with the sincerest and most intense Devotion; which we may the rather do, as knowing,

II. THAT our Worship is a *most holy Worship*, and tends in the best Manner to promote Holiness, both in our Hearts and Lives: *And Holiness becomes thy House, O Lord, forever. Now Holiness consists in being heartily devoted to God, so as to hate what he hates, and love what he loves; and in being concerned above all Things to be conformed to his purity, Righteousness, Goodness and Truth.* As therefore God hates all Sin and Wickedness, that must be a most holy Worship that testifies the utmost Abhorrence of every thing sinful, wicked and impure: And as he loves all purity, Righteousness, Truth, Goodness and Mercy, that must be a most holy Worship that tends to make us love

and practise every Thing that is pure and holy, true and righteous; kind and merciful. And as the Love of God is the Foundation of all Religion and Virtue, that must be a most holy Worship that tends to inspire us with the supreme Love of God, which will dispose us to do Him the utmost Honour, and make us like Him, and as obedient to Him as ever we are able. By these Principles then let us try the Worship of the Church of *England*.

1. AND *first*, as to the negative Part of Holiness, which consists in hating and avoiding all Sin and Wickedness, which God hates; what can more effectually tend to this, than to begin with those Declarations of holy Scripture, from whence we may abundantly learn the Necessity of true Repentance, the Impossibility of Pardon without it; and the Assurance of God's Pardon and Mercy upon our true Repentance? And what can better tend to this Purpose, than the excellent *Exhortation* which the Minister thereupon makes, to put us upon the Exercise of such a Repentance, by *confessing and forsaking our Sins that we may obtain Mercy*? And what can more effectually tend to make us abhor our Sins and reform our Lives, than to begin our Worship with such a serious solemn Act of *Confession* of Sin, and imploring God's Mercy and Pardon in Jesus Christ, as is expressed in that excellent comprehensive Form, which our holy Mother the Church hath put into our Mouths; upon which the Minister is directed to declare God's Pardon to every true Penitent. By which she teacheth all her Children, that if they would look for the Acceptance of all their following Prayers and Praises, they should begin with such a solemn Act of renewing their Repentance, in Order to obtain God's Pardon and Acceptance, without which their Worship will be but mocking God: For if they *regard Iniquity in their Hearts, the Lord will not hear their Prayers*; and if they persist in their *Wickedness*, without Repentance, *their Prayers and all their Services are an Abomination to him*. On which Account I beseech you, as far as possible, to make Conscience of coming in Season, that you may have Opportunity, by such an Act of Repentance, to secure your Pardon, and the Acceptance of your following Services in the other Parts of Worship; and in order thereto, to perform this Confession in the most serious and

truly penitent Manner: And that you may be the more affected with it, you are wisely directed, every one, to repeat it with his own Mouth, that he may make it his own Act and Deed, recollecting in his Mind, with true Contrition, his own particular Sins and Infirmities. And what is said of this, is equally true of the Confession and Absolution in the Communion Office. And as this must have the best Tendency to make us hate and avoid all Sin and Wickedness; so the same is the Design of those Petitions in the Litany, wherein we pray *God to deliver us* from the Power and Guilt of all those Sins that are there particularly named; than all which, nothing can more effectually tend to promote this Part of Holiness, which consists in hating and forsaking our Sins.

II. And then *secondly*, as to the *positive* Part of Holiness, which consists in being *devoted to God*, to be *like Him*, and that from a Sense of Duty, and in Submission and *Obedience* to his Will; what can more tend to promote this, than all the other Parts of our Worship in their Order? Particularly,

1. The *Lord's Prayer*, which is the most wonderfully comprehensive, and on every Account the most excellent Form of Prayer that was ever composed in the World; and which our Lord hath made, as it were, the Badge of his Disciples: On which Account it cannot be sufficiently wondered at, that any that call themselves his Disciples, should not think themselves obliged in Conscience to use it, since he hath expressly commanded us, *when we pray to say, Our Father*, &c. especially since nothing can more effectually tend to promote universal Holiness, than the frequent and serious offering it up in our Devotions. For therein we address God, as our *heavenly Father*, which strongly teaches and obliges us to be his holy and obedient Children. Therein we pray for whatever may tend to promote his Glory, and our own best Good and Happiness, both Temporal and Spiritual. Particularly, we pray that we and all the World may *Hallow*, or do all the Honour we possibly can to his holy *Name*, both by Word and Deed. That his *Kingdom may come*, and rule in all our Hearts, which is a Kingdom of universal Holiness, into which no *unclean* or *unholy Thing can ever enter*. And that we *on Earth*, may all

all, in every Thing, learn to do and submit to his holy Will; as the Saints and Angels do in Heaven, that we may be forever holy and happy with them. We next testify our entire Dependence upon God, by praying for our *Daily Bread*, i. e. for our Preservation, and whatsoever is needful for our comfortable Subsistence; which Sense of our Dependence is a great Principle of true Holiness. We next pray for the *Forgiveness* of all our Sins, whereinssoever we have been unholy in Heart or Life; and that we may be qualified for God's Pardon, it must be supposed that we have truly repented of them; and we are here taught to testify our hearty *Forgiveness* of others, without which we dare not look for Forgiveness from Him; which is another great Article of that Holiness, in Imitation of him, without which no Man shall see the Lord. We then pray that he would keep us from all Temptation, to every kind of Sin or Unholiness; and that he would save and deliver us from all Evil; both the Evil of Sin, and the Evil of Punishment; both from the Power and Guilt of Sin here, and the Wrath and Displeasure of God hereafter, that we may be secure of his everlasting Favour. And lastly, in Dependence upon Him, and Acknowledgment to Him for all that we ask of Him, we ascribe unto Him, the Kingdom, Power, and Glory, for ever and ever. To which, as to all our Prayers, according to the Scripture Pattern we add a joint vocal Amen. Than all which, nothing can more abundantly tend to promote universal Piety and Holiness.

2. HAVING made this Entrance on the publick Worship of God, we proceed to the Celebration of his Praises in the Psalms of holy David, and other devout Hymns, taken out of the New Testament, and that admirable Christian Hymn called *Te Deum*, between the Lessons; all which breathe nothing but Holiness, Devotion and Purity. For they do either celebrate the Glories, Perfections, and Operations of God, in his wonderful Works of Creation, Providence, or Redemption; or express our Sense of our entire Dependence upon Him, and innumerable Obligations to his infinite Goodness; our Abhorrence of every Thing displeasing to Him, or our Resolution to be in all Things obedient to his Will; or explain the Duty and Happiness of

unto, to perform this Confession in the most serious and true

of every Virtue, or the Baseness, Perverseness and Misery of every Vice ; or open the glorious Views both of God's Kingdom of Grace, and his Kingdom of Glory, and teach us the Practice and Experience of all those heavenly Graces which are necessary to qualify us for an Interest in the Glories, and Felicities thereof. These, and such as these, are the noble Subjects of those sublime Odes, all which are in effect, nothing else but universal *Holiness to the Lord*. So that the *Psalms* are a most copious Store-House of Devotion, consisting of an endless and most beautiful Variety.

3. AFTER the *Psalms*, come the *Lessons*, taken out of the holy Scripture ; and under this Head, I may also mention the *Epistles* and *Gospels*, all being a Variety of select and most instructive Portions of the holy Oracles, which are best adapted to instruct the People in the Knowledge of Divine and Heavenly Things, and to improve them in Devotion and Holiness ; being all of them *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness*, that not only *the Man of God*, but even every Christian, *may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good Works*. For in them, either some Article of Faith, or Rule of Life is explained and inculcated ; or some ancient Prophecy, or some Gospel Fact correspondent to it, or some miraculous Operation, or remarkable Providence, or Example is set before us, &c. all tending to confirm our Faith and Hope, and to train us up in the blessed Trade of holy Living, for a happy Immortality, which is the whole Design and Business of this heavenly School, the House of God ; to which the publick Reading of the Word of God is so admirably subservient, that it is extremely surprising that any Christians, for the sake of tedious long Sermons, and extempore Prayers, which are but meer human Performances, should juggle out the *Psalms*, and reading the Scriptures, except here and there a little Scrap of them. This sure, if any Thing may be called imposing the Inventions of Men in the Worship of God ; for I believe it may be truly said, (with regard to many of their Assemblies at least) that there are twenty Times as much Scripture in one of our Services, as in one of theirs.

4. NEXT

4. NEXT to the Lessons, I may mention the *Creeds* as another Part of our public Worship, which also vastly tend to promote Piety and Holiness, and therefore ought by all Means to be openly recited when we worship God. For as *with the Heart, Man believeth unto Righteousness, so with the Mouth, Confession is made unto Salvation.* These Creeds are only brief Summaries of the Christian Doctrine, so that nothing can seem more strange than that any Christian should disapprove of them; and every Article of our most Holy Faith, is either a Motive or Obligation to Holiness.---For what can more tend to make us Holy, than to *believe* that we and all Creatures in *Heaven and Earth*, do depend entirely on *God the Father Almighty*, for both our Beings, and all we enjoy?---What can more engage us to it, than to *believe in Jesus Christ; his only Son, our Lord*, who came into our Nature, and taught us a most heavenly Doctrine, and *died* a most bitter Death, to kill the Power and take away the Guilt of Sin; and *arose* from the Dead, to confirm his Doctrine, and ascertain our Immortality, and that we might thereby be induced to arise to a new and holy Life; and *ascended into Heaven*, that we might thereby be taught and obliged to *mortify our earthly Members*, and *set our Affections on Things above, where Jesus is at the right Hand of God*?---What can better tend to make us careful of all our Behaviour, than to consider that *we must give an Account of ourselves to him*, when he shall return to *judge the Quick and the Dead*?---Especially if we consider further, that he hath sent *his Spirit*, which is the *Spirit of Holiness*, to enable us to mortify our Lusts and Passions, and to live as it becomes the redeemed of the Lord, and to be as it were the universal Soul of his Church, and the Fountain of all Spiritual Life to our Souls?---And how can we think of any Thing but true Repentance, Faith and Holiness, when these are the Qualifications indispensibly requisite, to give us a Place in the *holy Catholic Church of God*, and to entitle us to *the Forgiveness of our Sins*, and *everlasting Life*, and Happiness in his heavenly Kingdom?---Thus the Repetition of the several Articles of our Holy Faith still drive at the same blessed End, of promoting Universal Holiness; whether it be done in that short *Form of*
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sound Words, which is called the *Apostles' Creed*, as being a Summary of the Apostles' Doctrine; or in the *Nicene Creed*, which was agreed upon as a Summary of the Catholick Doctrine, within 250 Years after the Apostles' Times, by a general Council of Bishops from all Parts of the Christian Church; or in the other Creed which was formed to bear Testimony against the chief Heresies, which infested the Church in those and the following Ages.

5. LET us in the *next* Place observe, that the same Design of promoting all Manner of Holiness is the Drift and Tendency of all our Prayers in our publick Offices, particularly the *Collects* and *Litany*. Every one of our *Collects* aim at promoting true Holiness, either by praying for some particular Grace, or Deliverance from some Temptation, Sin or Calamity. And as to the *Litany*, (which Word means a *Supplication*) nothing can be devised or imagined more conducive to promote Devotion and Holiness, than that most excellent, that most devout and comprehensive Form of publick Devotion. For therein we pray, not only for Deliverance from every Sin and Calamity, but also for Grace to perform every Duty; and we not only testify and exercise our Devotion in praying for ourselves, for every Thing needful both for our Souls and Bodies, but also our Charity for others, in praying for them, even for all Men, whether Friends or Enemies; and at the same Time we shew our solicitious Concern for the publick Weal, in praying both for the whole Church, and for the King and all that are in Authority, both in Church and State, that under them we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty; and our tender Concern for the Distresses of our fellow Christians, in praying for all that are under any kind of Affliction, Whether in Mind, Body or Estate. In a Word, therein we pray for all Orders of Men, whether they be Ministers of Religion or Justice, and for all Conditions of Men, whether they be in Prosperity or Adversity; so very particular and comprehensive are our Supplications in the Litany, together with the Prayers and Thanksgiving annexed to it, both in general, and for a Variety of particular Occasions. So that it is scarce possible to conceive what the Church could have done more, that

that she hath not done, in providing for the publick Devotions; especially since she hath by the Canon allowed the Minister a discretionary Liberty of expressing himself in the Prayer before the Sermon.

AND under this Head we may take Notice of the Wisdom and Goodness of the Church, in the Appointment of the several *Festivals* and *Fasts*, and in the Provision that is made for them: In which, once in the Course of every Year, we commemorate each of the several Steps of our Redeemer, in the Restoration of Mankind; his *Incarnation, Birth, and Manifestation to the Gentiles*; his *Death, Resurrection, Ascension*, and the *Mission of the Holy Ghost*: For each of which, there are suitable Prayers and Passages, collected from the Epistles and Gospels. By which excellent Method we are led in the Course of each Year to recollect ourselves more particularly upon each Article of our most holy Faith; and moreover the Examples of the holy Apostles who propagated it through the World, and suffered Martyrdom in Attestation to it. All which do evidently tend to the Advancement of Piety and Holiness.

6. THIS same may be also most truly said of our *Communion Office*. In which, what is there can more conduce to make us Holy in all Manner of Conversation, than to have each of God's Holy Commandments rehearsed in a most grave and solemn Manner, and for all the People, after every one of them, to pray for God's *Mercy* to pardon their Offences against it, and his Grace to *incline their Hearts to keep it* for the future, and to *write all his Laws in their Hearts*? And, as the Holy Sacrament is the most Divine and Heavenly Institution of our Religion, and the most solemn Act of our Worship, the Design of which is, to inspire our Souls with a most grateful Sense of the mighty Love of our blessed Lord and Master in dying for us, in order to destroy both the Power and Guilt of Sin; and to seal a Pardon to us upon our true Repentance, and fill us with the most ardent Devotion to God and our Lord Jesus, and the most affectionate Charity one towards another; so the Manner of our administering and receiving it in the Church is excellent beyond that of any others. For which we are prepared, by a very suitable Exhortation and Confession of
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our Sins, with the Declaration of our Pardon and the *great and precious Promises* whereof this Sacrament is a Seal. We are then called upon to *lift up our Hearts* to God in the most seraphic Form of Thanksgiving, wherein the Church militant on Earth joins, and, as it were, holds Communion with the holy Church triumphant which is above; *the Angels and Archangels, and all the Company of Heaven; saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty; Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory; Glory be to thee O Lord most High. Amen.* The Elements are then consecrated or set apart to represent the Body and Blood of Christ, in the gravest and most solemn Manner, with the Words of our blessed Lord's Institution; and in the Administration the inestimable Benefits of his Death are expressed in the Delivery of them, to each particular Person, receiving them in the devoutest Manner upon his Knees; which is the most decent Posture wherein to receive the Seal of our Pardon. And lastly, the whole Office is concluded with devoting ourselves to God both in Body & Soul, in our Lord's Prayer and others; the devoutest Prayers and Thanksgivings, and ends with an excellent Benediction; than all which, I must think nothing can be imagined more conducive to train us up in all Holiness, Devotion and Virtue for the Glories of the heavenly state. I shall, for Brevity, add nothing here concerning the other Offices of our public Worship; and will only say, that whoever will consider them with Candour and Attention, will find them all, and especially those of *Baptism, Confirmation, and the Communion*, abundantly conduce to the same blessed Purpose. Thus I have briefly shewed that our Worship is a most *holy Worship*, as it abundantly provides for the promoting of Holiness. I proceed now to shew,

III. THAT it is also a most *beautiful Worship*, and is truly *worshipping God in the Beauty of Holiness. i. e.* That it not only every Way conduceth to promote all Manner of Holiness, but that it doth it in the most beautiful and advantageous Manner. For *Beauty consists in the Fitness, Proportion, Variety and Uniformity of Things with regard to the End designed in them.* Now according to this Definition, which, I think, expresseth the true Notion of

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Beauty

Beauty in all other Things, our Worship in the Church of *England* must be allowed to be most beautiful; particularly in the *Fitness and Excellency of its Language*,--the *Proportion of its Parts*,--the *Variety of its Matter*,--the *Uniformity of its Manner*;--the *Gesture, Voice, Poetry, and Music*, all contributing to Devotion and Holiness.

R. Our Worship is truly beautiful in its *Language*, which is very weighty and expressive. It may, perhaps, be granted that in a few Passages it may be capable of some Improvement; but in general, this must be allowed to be the Character of its Language, that it carrieth a great Force and Weight with it, without either Deficiency or Redundancy, and is in the happy Medium between an Affectation of Verbosity, and high flown Figures, on the one Hand, and Obscurity and Dulness, and a low, vulgar Meanness of Expression on the other. It hath a Grandeur and Majesty in it, and at the same time, a most easy, natural, intelligible Simplicity; always fitted to the Weight and Importance of the Matter, and the Capacities of the whole Body of the Worshipers. If it savours of Antiquity, and on that Account be thought not so polite to modern Ears, yet this very Thing giveth it an Air of the greater Gravity and Importance, and there are but very few Expressions that are at all the less intelligible, though it is nigh 200 Years old; and it adds much to its Beauty, that it is expressed as far as it could well be, in the very Language of Scripture, being an excellent Collection from the very Word of God, which is ever full of Majesty and Grandeur. And as there cannot be a more decent and beautiful Sight than to behold a great Number of intelligent Beings, the Creatures and Children of God, jointly conspiring to do all the Honour they can to him, their common Parent, in their united Adoration of him; so there is the greatest Propriety and Fitness in it, and consequently the greatest Beauty, that they should worship their heavenly Father in his own Language; in the Words which he hath put into their Mouths. If therefore we love the Scriptures, we cannot fail to love the Worship of the Church of *England*, which is, for the most Part, taken from them, and entirely conformed to them. But

2. It adds to the Beauty of our excellent Liturgy, that there is an *admirable Proportion* in all its Parts: insomuch that no one Part is so swelled or enlarged beyond its Measure, as to juggle out or starve another. There is a just Proportion of Devotions and Lessons, of Prayers and Praises, of Confessions and Deprecations, of Supplications and Intercessions, of Petitions and Thanksgivings, for ourselves and for all Men, for Kings, and all that are in Authority, and for all Orders and Conditions of Men. — And as all these Parts of Worship, without Deficiency or Redundancy, are thus so exquisitely fitted and proportioned one to the other, so they all aim at one End, to which they are no less aptly fitted and proportion'd, viz. to advance the Honour of God and the general Benefit of Mankind, and to promote universal Holiness and Righteousness among them; all which Considerations abundantly speak their Harmony and Beauty. And

3. This Beauty is further mightily improved by that *grateful Variety* that appears among them, which renders our Liturgy like a beautiful Garden, wherein there is a delightful Variety of luxuriant Nature intermixed with curious Art: of other various Plants with Trees; of Fruits with Flowers of divers Sorts, all ranged in a various and beautiful Order. In like Manner, in our Liturgy, Devotions are gratefully intermixed with Lessons, and Prayers with Praises. The People's Part is generally intermixed with the Minister's, and short Responses, in the Form of Ejaculations, with set and continued Prayers, in which there is an agreeable Variety, and the Prayers are each of them short, in Imitation of our Lord's Prayer; and there is a correspondent Variety of Actions of the Body, suited to this Variety of the Exercises of the Mind; all wisely contrived to keep the Congregations wakeful, lively and attentive. This Method is therefore vastly preferable to one tedious, long-continued Prayer, without any Variety, as is the Case with our Neighbours, in which the People's Attention flags, and they grow dull and heavy, and the Force of their Devotion is extremely weakened. On which Account nothing should tempt me to exchange our beautiful Variety of short Devotions, for their long, dull, and unvaried Performances: For such is our Frailty at best, that we need all the wise Precautions imaginable to be used to

keep our Minds vigorous, wakeful and attentive, both by a Variety of Devotions and of bodily Worship, which is the true Intent of all that beautiful Variety wherewith our Worship is attended; and which, in Proportion as it attains those Ends, it may be truly stiled, *the Beauty of Holiness*. But,

4. Tho' there is such a grateful Variety in our Method of Worship, there is nevertheless a most *beautiful Uniformity* therein prescribed, which if acted up to, would vastly add to the Beauty and Excellency of it: Particularly in the uniform Appearance and *Gesture of the Body* in the whole Assembly, prescribed to each Part of Worship. This is made light of by many as a trivial Matter, but herein they are certainly much in the wrong. St. Paul's reasoning is very forcible to shew the Necessity of bodily Worship, in 1 Cor. vi. 20, where he tells us *we are bought with a Price*, meaning our Bodies as well as our Souls, and that with no less a Price than the Blood of the Son of God, and therefore it is most fit and reasonable that we should *glorify God with our Bodies as well as our Spirits*, which are equally his; and of great Use is bodily Adoration: The Eye is apt to affect the Heart, and the Liveliness and Activity of our Bodies naturally awakens and enlivens our Minds. Hence the Church has wisely thought fit to direct and prescribe the Motions and Postures of our Bodies as well as the Devotions of our Minds, that as St. Paul directs, 1 Cor. xiv. 40, 26, *all Things may be done decently and in Order. and for the Use of edifying*. Now the Postures of the Body I shall here mention are sitting, standing and kneeling: Of these *sitting* is the farthest from betokening any thing like Reverence or Devotion. For which Reason it is very strange that any Christians should use that Posture either in Prayers or Sacraments, since according to the common Acceptation of Mankind, nothing is understood to be more disrespectful and irreverent, and therefore indecent and absurd. It is indeed not improperly indulged while we are in a Condition of Hearers and Learners, as in the Time of Sermon, but utterly inconsistent with the Condition of Worshippers, in which Case *standing or kneeling* was always used by the Church of God; and with good Reason; because
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the Posture or Action of the Body was ever considered as a Kind of Language expressive of the inward Sense of the Mind; and as such it is used in holy Scripture; where you observe that *kneeling* is always the Posture of *Prayer*, and *standing* the Posture of *Praise*; which we ought accordingly to observe, if we would express a due Regard to that glorious Almighty Being whom we adore. For this Reason our Church, according to Scripture, prescribes that we kneel at our Prayers and stand at our Praises. Since therefore, Beauty implies *Uniformity in the Mids of Variety*, the *Beauty of Holiness* in the Worship of God, must manifestly imply that according to the Rules of the Church we should all act alike in one uniform Manner. If then, there be not that Beauty of Uniformity in our Worship that were to be wished, it is not because the Church doth not prescribe it, but because we do not act up to her Prescriptions. What can be more beautiful than a well-disciplined Army, where all look one Way, all observe the same Motions, all act alike with the utmost Exactness, according to the Word of Command. Now what is a Beauty there, would be equally so in the public Worship, where, as well as in an Army, all should be Life and Activity, Uniformity and Exactness, *Decency and Order*, as if one Soul animated every Body. This would be indeed to *worship God in the Beauty of Holiness*. Moreover,

5. As our Worship would be entirely beautiful if the Rules of it were observed as to the Uniformity of Gesture; so I must think it another great Article in its Beauty, that the People bear a *uniform vocal Part* in it, insomuch that we do literally, *with one Mouth* and Voice, as well as *one Mind* and Heart *glorify God* our heavenly Father. For as there cannot be imagined a more beautiful Sight than for a large Number of Worshippers to join together in Worship with one Heart and Voice, like Children in doing Honour to a common Parent; so it looks like a Kind of holy Strife, in our Method of joint vocal Worship, who shall do the greatest Honour to our common heavenly Parent, while, *keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, we do, as it were, call upon one another, (the Minister and the people interchangably) and *admonish one another* in the short Responses,

Responses, and in the *Psalms and Hymns and spiritual Songs*, all with Life and Spirit chaunting forth the high Praises of God. I am sensible, to those who have been bred up in a contrary Way, this Method may seem at first to look like Confusion; but let me assure those to whom it may so seem, that if they would only have each his Book, and see every Thing with his own Eyes, and come a little while into the Custom, this Objection would not only entirely vanish, but soon turn into the Appearance of a very sensible Beauty, and be found to be a solid Advantage. For not only the Eye, as I observed before, but also the Ear would affect the Heart, and it would not only animate a Spirit of Devotion towards God, but a Spirit of Charity towards one another, to find ourselves surrounded with our Christian Neighbours and Brethren, all joining together, and according to the Pattern of the holy Apostles, (*Acts iv. 24*) *lifting up our Voices with one Accord* in the Prayers and Praises offered up to Almighty God. My Neighbour's Voice will be so far from interrupting, that it will rather animate my Devotion, and give it the more Life and Spirit. This is what, I assure you, I find to be the Case; and I believe I may appeal to the Experience of all that have had an Opportunity of coming into a Habit of it. And let me farther assure you, that now after near forty Years Use of our excellent Method of Worship, upon this Account, as well as the other Reasons above mentioned, it is so far from growing tedious or a Matter of Formality, as some imagine, that every Opportunity seems to add fresh Life, and I see fresh Beauties, and find further Advantages in it from Time to Time. And one Thing that makes it the rather appear so amiable is, that in the Use of it I am offering up, not the Devotions of this or that Assembly only, much less of this or that particular Person or Minister, but the Prayers and Praises of the whole English Church and Nation, enjoined by lawful Authority, and which every Assembly is jointly offering up at the same Time. And moreover, that, I find I am worshipping God according to the antient Scripture Method wherein it was the Manner for all the People to *lift up their Voice with one Accord*, not only in Singing, but in saying their Devotions. I find how this Method was established

by David, 1 Chron. xvi. 4---36, how it was continued by Ezra after the Captivity, Neb. viii. 6. and ix. 5, &c. and still practised by the Apostles in the Christian Church, Acts iv. 24. So in other Places where we read how all the People said Amen, and praised the Lord, 2 Chron. vii. 3. Ps. cvi. 48. 1 Cor. xiv. 16. And as the Church militant, so the Church triumphant are represented by St. John in the Revelation as worshipping in the same Manner, saying Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb that was slain, and their Voice was like the Noise of many Rivers. Rev. vii. 10. and xix. 6. Thus you see our Method of Worship according to the most antient Scripture Pattern, and that in Heaven as well as on Earth. And me thinks, as we would hope at length to join with the heavenly Choir above, we should delight to worship God in this beautiful Method while we are here on Earth, for this you must plainly see is to worship him in the Beauty of Holiness.

6. And now lastly, I might, if there was Room, add a good Deal more upon the Beauty of our Poetry and Music. As to the Poetry of the Version of the Psalms which we use, I must think it none of the least of the many Beauties and Excellencies wherein we have vastly the Advantage of our Neighbours, that we use such an excellent Version, which excels theirs beyond all Comparison. And in the Harmony of our Music we generally excel, and should do so much more, if we would more generally take a little Pains to be versed in the Tunes and Rules of Singing. And truly it is very disagreeable to see so many sit down with their Mouths shut, when the rest are engaged in so beautiful and amiable a Part of Worship, than which nothing can more contribute to the promoting of Devotion and Holiness. How can it be, that any of you can sit as unconcerned Spectators, while so heavenly and delightful a Part of Worship is carrying on; especially those of the Fair Sex, whose Voices joined with ours, would mightily add to the Beauty and Harmony of this melodious Part of Worship; in which, methinks all should be active and forward to do what they can, and every one might do something in bearing a Part in it. And if to our vocal, we add instrumental Music; if according to the antient Scripture Method, we add Organs to our Voices, and if to both of them we would add the sincere and intense Devotion of our Hearts, our Worship would then be a very Heaven upon Earth, especially if we used the admirable Chaunt of the Cathedral.

Thus I have endeavoured to demonstrate, not only that ours is the true genuine Worship, and that it is adapted in the best Manner to promote Devotion and Holiness, but that we do truly worship God in the Beauty of Holiness. Let us therefore, my Brethren, rejoice and give Thanks to Almighty God for the unspeakable Advantages we enjoy, and be zealous in our Attachment to this our holy and beautiful Worship, and be steady and diligent in our Attendance on it. We shall be inexcusable if we neglect it,

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we are cold, formal, dull and lifeless in the Performance of this so right and reasonable, so beautiful and amiable a Service. And above all, let us take great Care that we adorn our Worship by living answerably to the mighty Obligations it lays us under; since it is a most holy Worship, let us be holy in all Manner of Conversation, for it is written, *be ye holy, for I am holy.* We have lately had an Adversary § who pretends to shew, as an Argument, *that where the Church prevails, all Manner of Wickedness* But how groundless and abusive is it to reproach the Church with this, when, as I have abundantly shewn you, nothing can more tend to promote Holiness than our most holy Worship, and nothing can more effectually tend to destroy the Power of Sin. If therefore Sin does any where abound where the Church obtains, it must be ascribed to some other Cause; and other Causes enough there are to account for it, without assigning this; and particularly, propagating licentious Principles. It cannot certainly be occasioned by Conformity, but by teaching and acting in Disconformity, and Opposition to all the Principles and Rules of the Church. Let it therefore be seriously considered by every one whom it may concern, that a wicked Churchman is the most inexcusable of all Creatures, for surely he is under much stronger Obligations to Holiness than any other Christian whatsoever. Let us then all resolve that we will confute this Reproach by the Amendment of our Lives, and do all we can to adorn the Religion we profess by the exemplary Holiness of our Behaviour, and so cause our Light to shine before Men, that all that are about us may acknowledge that God is in us of a Truth, and beholding our good Works, may heartily join with us in glorifying God our heavenly Father. And lest by neglecting this pure and holy Worship, we provoke him to abandon us, let us by no Means forsake the assembling ourselves together as the Manner of some is, but exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of us be hardened thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin. And finally, as our eternal Interest lies at Stake, let us rouse up ourselves, and be all Life and Vigour in the Performance of our Parts of this amiable Worship, that we may thereby make all possible Proficiency in Devotion and Holiness; that being planted in the House of the Lord, we may grow and flourish in the Courts of the House of our God, and bring forth Fruit unto old Age, even all the Fruits of Holiness and Righteousness whereby our heavenly Father may be glorified, and our reasonable, active, and immortal Nature, as far as possible, improved and perfected in all moral Graces and heavenly Virtues; so shall we be prepared, when God calls, to quit this present Stage with Cheerfulness, and bear a Part with the blessed Choir above, the innumerable Company of Angels and Spirits of just Men made perfect, in all the Glories and Felicities of the heavenly State.

§ Mr. H. art.

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